

NANKING

Monday May 27 or 28
1946

Dearest:

It's about 11⁴⁵ PM. I'm sitting in a bare room with 5000 Chinese moths and insects pounding at a screen, Loucks and Burwell have faded to bed. They are larks and very droopy by the day's end. We got here Friday afternoon and have not had any meals except breakfast when we were not some body's guests. Almost no time to ourselves and an infinity of impressions of every sort to see, to hear, to decide upon and to remember. I've just finished page 53 of an all too scant diary. When I can send it from Peiping I'll ask GRR to send you a copy.

The country is going through or into a dizzy spiral of inflation. Prices are 3000 x what they were in 1936 and no one knows when the crash will be complete the ruin of the

salaried class — i.e. the more important government personnel. They get about 500 times the salary they had in 1936 but 3000 is what they ought to have. The U.S. dollar is at 2020, where it ought to be at 3000 so living is expensive here too for Americans, too. 60 cents for a glass of milk, 25 cents for a small orange. Unlike France where you couldn't find anything to buy it is purchaseable — at murderous prices.

We keep completely well. Louches is widely known and much liked by the Chinese who rush forward to greet him every where he goes. Burwell is enjoying the change and finding much he never thought of before. I think it's a harmonious and successful "Mission" but my suspicion grows daily that we are taking a snapshot of a whirlwind. The country slips daily into a deeper morass of

political instability and currency depreciation.
How the PUMC could possibly resume
work in such a moving Kaleidoscope I
don't see. "Ghosts sitting in the light telling
people stories" describes many of our talks.
Don't expect the lot of 1932 returning
travellers! If we fly there won't be the
weight allowed us and we expect to fly. And
silk has gone sky high and jewels to the
stars. I'm sorry but sorry for these people
whose world is rolling away.

China is above all DUSTY. Picturesque
but dusty. Impressive but dusty. Hot and
... you guessed it. I was going to say beautiful
but to see beauty you must be happy inside
and as in Europe the human scene is a
little too poignant. Tomorrow we are going
to drive with some ⁵⁰ ~~40~~ PUMC graduates, 40

of them nurses who have been riding buses
and jeeps and weapons carriers and trains
from Cheng-tu hither, steadily since April
27th. A very fine performance and the
more so since not always safe, and never
clean or even remotely comfortable. And yet
they will be smiling and dainty and sociable.

I wish I could take off a whole day
to write you a full description of it — of
even small parts of it. May be the airplane
employees strike will keep us here long
enough to make that possible. It does
not look as though we would get to
Peiping Wednesday nor Thursday nor Friday.
And I did want a letter on Wednesday
for it seems two months since I left you.
Hove and kisses all to you first & last and
the same to the kids between whiles.
Yrs and no less Alan.